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**UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL**  
**(Large Entity)***(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))*Docket No.  
99-081Total Pages in this Submission  
44**TO THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS**Box Patent Application  
Washington, D.C. 20231

Transmitted herewith for filing under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) and 37 C.F.R. 1.53(b) is a new utility patent application for an invention entitled:

**GAMES OF CHANCE WITH PLAYER-SPECIFIED ELEMENTS**

and invented by:

**Jay S. WALKER, James A. JORASCH, Peter KIM, Geoffrey M. GELMAN, Andrew P. GOLDEN, Russell Pratt SAMMON, and Norman C. GILMAN**If a **CONTINUATION APPLICATION**, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☒ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No.: 60/189,218

Which is a:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No.:

Which is a:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No.:

Enclosed are:

**Application Elements**

1. ☒ Filing fee as calculated and transmitted as described below
2. ☒ Specification having 23 pages and including the following:
  - a. ☒ Descriptive Title of the Invention
  - b. ☒ Cross References to Related Applications *(if applicable)*
  - c. ☐ Statement Regarding Federally-sponsored Research/Development *(if applicable)*
  - d. ☐ Reference to Microfiche Appendix *(if applicable)*
  - e. ☒ Background of the Invention
  - f. ☒ Brief Summary of the Invention
  - g. ☒ Brief Description of the Drawings *(if drawings filed)*
  - h. ☒ Detailed Description
  - i. ☒ Claim(s) as Classified Below
  - j. ☒ Abstract of the Disclosure

# UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL (Large Entity)

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

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44

## Application Elements (Continued)

3. ☒ Drawing(s) (when necessary as prescribed by 35 USC 113)
- a. ☒ Formal Number of Sheets 7
- b. ☐ Informal Number of Sheets \_\_\_\_\_
4. ☒ Oath or Declaration
- a. ☒ Newly executed (original or copy) ☐ Unexecuted
- b. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d)) (for continuation/divisional application only)
- c. ☒ With Power of Attorney ☐ Without Power of Attorney
- d. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)  
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application,  
see 37 C.F.R. 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
5. ☐ Incorporation By Reference (usable if Box 4b is checked)  
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.
6. ☐ Computer Program in Microfiche (Appendix)
7. ☐ Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission (if applicable, all must be included)
- a. ☐ Paper Copy
- b. ☐ Computer Readable Copy (identical to computer copy)
- c. ☐ Statement Verifying Identical Paper and Computer Readable Copy

jc859 U.S. PTO  
09/602869  
06/23/00

## Accompanying Application Parts

8. ☒ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
9. ☐ 37 CFR 3.73(B) Statement (when there is an assignee)
10. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
11. ☒ Information Disclosure Statement/PTO-1449 ☒ Copies of IDS Citations
12. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
13. ☒ Acknowledgment postcard
14. ☒ Certificate of Mailing
- ☐ First Class ☒ Express Mail (Specify Label No.): EL548811474US

# UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL (Large Entity)

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

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44

## Accompanying Application Parts (Continued)

15. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) (if foreign priority is claimed)

16. ☐ Additional Enclosures (please identify below):

## Fee Calculation and Transmittal

### CLAIMS AS FILED

For	#Filed	#Allowed	#Extra	Rate	Fee
Total Claims	37	- 20 =	17	x \$18.00	\$306.00
Indep. Claims	8	- 3 =	5	x \$78.00	\$390.00
Multiple Dependent Claims (check if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/>					\$0.00
BASIC FEE					\$690.00
OTHER FEE (specify purpose) _____					
TOTAL FILING FEE					\$1,386.00

- ☐ A check in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ to cover the filing fee is enclosed.
- ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge and credit Deposit Account No. **50-0271** as described below. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.
- ☒ Charge the amount of **\$1,386.00** as filing fee.
  - ☒ Credit any overpayment.
  - ☒ Charge any additional filing fees required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 and 1.17.
  - ☐ Charge the issue fee set in 37 C.F.R. 1.18 at the mailing of the Notice of Allowance, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.311(b).

  
Signature

Nathaniel Levin  
Attorney for Applicant



**22927**

Dated: June 23, 2000

CC:

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:	Jay S. WALKER et al.	)	Customer No.:	22927
		)		
For:	GAMES OF CHANCE WITH PLAYER-SPECIFIED ELEMENTS	)	Examiner	Not Yet Assigned
		)		
Serial No.:	Not Yet Assigned	)	Group Art Unit:	Not Yet Assigned
		)		
Filing Date:	June 23, 2000	)	Docket No.:	99-081

1c859 U.S. PTO  
09/602869  
06/23/00

**BOX PATENT APPLICATION**

Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

**TRANSMITTAL LETTER**

Sir:

Applicants hereby submit the following documents for the above-identified patent application:

1. Certificate of Mailing By Express Mail (37 CFR 1.10) No. EL548811474US;
2. Utility Patent Application Transmittal Letter (Large Entity);
3. Patent Application (23 pgs.);
4. Formal Drawings (Figs. 1-7, 7pgs.)
5. Combined Declaration and Power of Attorney;
6. Assignment with Recordation Cover Sheet;
7. Information Disclosure Statement;
8. PTO Form 1449;
9. Copies of twenty-eight (28) references cited therein; and
10. Acknowledgment Postcard.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge \$1,426.00 to Deposit Account No. 50-0271 Order No. 99-081 for the fees required. This fee includes the patent application fee of \$1,386.00 and an additional \$ 40.00 for Recordation of the Assignment. The Commissioner is further authorized to charge any further required fees, or to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0271 Order No. 99-081. A duplicate copy of this authorization is attached for such purpose.

Respectfully submitted,



Nathaniel Levin  
Attorney for Applicants  
PTO Reg. No. 34,860  
Walker Digital Corporation  
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June 23, 2000  
Date

**Certificate of Mailing By Express Mail**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service via Express Mail in an Envelope No. EL548811474US with sufficient postage addressed to Box Patent Applications, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on June 23, 2000.

Tara D. Gee  
Typed Name of Person Making Deposit

  
Signature

06/23/00  
Date

**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING BY "EXPRESS MAIL" (37 CFR 1.10)**

Applicant(s): WALKER et al.

Docket No.

99-081

Serial No.

Not Yet Assigned

Filing Date

June 23, 2000

Examiner

Not Yet Assigned

Group Art Unit

Not Yet Assigned

Invention: GAMES OF CHANCE WITH PLAYER-SPECIFIED ELEMENTS

jc859 U.S. PRO  
09/02869  
06/23/00I hereby certify that this Patent Application

(Identify type of correspondence)

is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 CFR 1.10 in an envelope addressed to: The Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C.

20231-0001 on June 23, 2000

(Date)

Tara D. Gee

(Typed or Printed Name of Person Mailing Correspondence)

(Signature of Person Mailing Correspondence)

EL548811474US

("Express Mail" Mailing Label Number)

Note: Each paper must have its own certificate of mailing.

## GAMES OF CHANCE WITH PLAYER-SPECIFIED ELEMENTS

### 5 CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This is a continuation-in-part of co-pending prior provisional patent application serial no. 60/189,218, filed March 14, 2000, which is incorporated herein by reference.

### FIELD

10 The present invention is concerned with games of chance, including slot machines and other games that are suitable for play in a casino and/or as computer video games.

### BACKGROUND

15 In many games of chance, the game outcome is determined on the basis of two or more independent outcomes. For example, in the card game blackjack, the outcome of the game depends on comparing the respective scores of a randomly dealt player's hand (first random outcome) and a randomly dealt dealer's hand (second random outcome).

20 As another example, in a video poker game based on the game of draw poker, the outcome of a hand depends upon the initial, randomly dealt hand configuration (first random outcome) as well as the cards randomly drawn (second random outcome) to replace discards from the initial hand configuration.

25 As still another example, the outcome of a play cycle in a slot machine is determined by a combination of the respective random outcomes that correspond to the final positions of the reels of the slot machine.

Because these games involve more than one random outcome, there is more than one way that the player may lose or may suffer bad luck. For example, in blackjack, the player may lose either by "busting" (exceeding a twenty-one count in the player's hand) or by having a lower count than the dealer. If a player suffers a run of bad luck, he/she may become frustrated and cease playing the game. This is disadvantageous to the proprietor of the gaming establishment or device.

It is considered desirable from the point of view of the game proprietor to give the player more options relative to the game so that the player feels that he/she has a better

opportunity to change his/her luck and therefore continue playing. Certain known modifications to popular games have attempted to provide the player with additional options. For example, in U.S. Patent No. 5,660,391, issued to Klasee, a variation on blackjack is disclosed. According to this variation, the player places a bet on one of five possible hand outcomes, namely blackjack, twenty-one, twenty, nineteen or eighteen. Four cards are dealt and using those cards the best ranking blackjack hand is assembled. If the resulting hand matches the player's bet, then the player wins.

According to another known variation on blackjack, casinos issue promotional coupons that may be presented at a blackjack table as a "free ace" to form part of the player's hand.

Patent No. 4,200,291, issued to Hooker, discloses a modified slot machine in which the player can select one or two of the slot machine reels to be held at the same position at which the reels ended the previous play cycle and which was randomly determined. If the player exercises this option, then only one or two reels are spun in the next cycle in an attempt to match the position of the held reel or reels.

U.S. Patent No. 6,068,552, issued May 30, 2000, entitled, "A Gaming Device and Method of Operation Thereof," and commonly assigned with this application, discloses a slot machine in which the player is allowed to customize parameters such as payouts or frequency of winning outcomes.

It is also a common practice in state-run lotteries to permit players either to specify the numbers to be played or to have the numbers chosen automatically and randomly by computer.

It would be desirable to provide improved games of chance that would encourage the player to continue playing and to attempt to change his luck in cases where a losing streak has occurred. It would also be desirable to provide improved games that are simpler and easier to play and therefore generally more attractive to players.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to an aspect of the invention there is provided a method of administering a game, where the game involves at least a first random outcome and a second random

outcome combined according to game rules to produce a game outcome, and the method includes receiving a player request for a specific entry instead of one of the random outcomes, wherein the specific entry is selected from a finite set of possibilities not determined by chance and affects a likelihood of a game outcome. The method also  
5 includes combining the specific entry and the remaining one of the random outcomes according to the game rules to determine the game outcome.

In an embodiment of the invention applied as a modification of blackjack, the specific entry is a specific score requested by the player to replace either the player's hand or dealer's hand. For example, the player may request a score of 18 to be compared against  
10 the dealer's hand, or may request that the dealer's hand be replaced with a score of 18 and that the player's hand be compared against that score. The specific entry may be requested by placing a betting chip in an appropriate circle in a blackjack table to indicate that the player is requesting the specific entry. As an alternative, the specific entry may be represented by a game piece, such as a plastic item bearing the indicia "18" to indicate that  
15 the player has "bought" a player's hand score of 18.

As understood from examples mentioned above, it is contemplated to practice the invention in the environment of a casino. It is also contemplated to practice the invention in video gaming devices and/or by means of gaming sites maintained on the Internet.

The present invention may be applied to the game of draw poker, by allowing the  
20 player to request a specific entry in the form of an initial configuration of the player's hand. That is, the player is permitted in this embodiment to request the five specific cards which would replace the initial hand ordinarily dealt in draw poker. Alternatively, the player may be permitted to request a particular opening hand suitable for drawing to a target hand. If the target hand, for example, is a royal flush, the player may be permitted to request ace,  
25 king, queen, jack of the same suit, plus possibly a low card (for discard) from another suit.

The present invention may also be applied to a slot machine, or more preferably to a video representation of a slot machine, by allowing the player to specify the final positions of one or more reels of the slot machine. Assume that a player wishes only to play for a relatively large payout and that the largest payout is provided by a game outcome of three  
30 7's. The player may then be permitted to specify "7" as the final position for two reels, with the final position of a third reel to be determined randomly.



Another aspect of the invention provides an apparatus for administering a game, where the game involves a first random outcome and a second random outcome combined according to game rules to produce a game outcome, and the apparatus includes a processor, an input device connected to the processor, a display connected to the processor and a  
5 memory connected to the processor and storing a program. According to this aspect of the invention, the processor is operative with the program to receive a player request for a specific entry, where the specific entry replaces one of the random outcomes, the specific entry being such as to affect a likelihood of a game outcome and being selected from a finite set of possibilities not determined by chance. The processor is also operative to combine the  
10 specific entry and a remaining one of the random outcomes according to the game rules to produce the game outcome. The input device and the display may be connected to the processor via the Internet or may be contained in a housing together with the processor and the memory. The input device may include push buttons on a video game machine which includes the processor and the other components, or may be implemented via a graphical  
15 user interface of a personal computer or an information appliance programmed to function as a gaming terminal in communication with a gaming website.

A further aspect of the invention provides a method of playing a game of twenty-one, including the steps of allowing a player to select a specific count value instead of a player's hand, dealing and playing a dealer's hand, and comparing the specific count value  
20 to the dealer's hand to determine the winner of the game.

According to still another aspect of the invention, a method of playing a poker game includes allowing a player to select an initial hand that has not been determined by chance, allowing the player to draw at least one additional card to complete the hand, and determining whether the completed hand matches a target hand. It is contemplated to  
25 practice this aspect of the invention by using a video game device, or in conjunction with a video gaming website.

Yet another aspect of the invention provides a method of operating a slot machine (which may be a virtual or video representation of a slot machine), the method including allowing a player to specify a final position of at least one reel (which may be a virtual reel),  
30 the final position not being predetermined by chance, and the method further including the step of spinning at least one other reel of the slot machine to determine an outcome of a play

cycle. According to one embodiment, the slot machine, whether or not virtual, has only three reels, and the player is allowed to specify respective positions of two of the reels, with only the third reel being spun.

By modifying known games to permit a player to select specific entries, the present invention makes the games more attractive to players. The present invention gives players a greater sense of control over the game and a feeling that the player can change his/her luck, or at least escape from a run of a certain kind of bad luck or from a continued term of bad luck. As a result, players may continue playing, rather than becoming discouraged, so that proprietors of the game benefit from more continuous and predictable play activity by the players. Furthermore, the initial player bet, the game outcome payout, and/or a fee for a specific entry may be adjusted so that the proprietor of the game is compensated for at least a part of a potential advantage that would otherwise accrue to the player as a result of the specific entry requested by the player.

It is contemplated to apply the present invention to any game of chance having two or more random outcomes, including the games of craps and pai gow in addition to other games referred to above.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

FIG. 1 is a flow chart that provides an overview of a method of administering a game in accordance with an aspect of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a schematic block diagram of a video game device in which aspects of the present invention may be applied;

FIG. 3 is a schematic block diagram of a gaming system, implemented via the Internet, and in which aspects of the present invention may be applied;

FIG. 4 is a flow chart that illustrates a method of carrying out the present invention;

FIG. 5 is a schematic plan view of a gaming table adapted for use with an aspect of the present invention;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of a laminated plastic game piece used in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 7 illustrates a display screen provided in accordance with another aspect of the invention.

5

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The following definitions shall apply in this specification and in the appended claims:

10

**client device**: Includes a personal computer, portable computer, palm top device, cellular telephone, personal digital assistant or any other device programmed with a browser program or other program to interact as a client relative to a host computer.

15

**game indicia**: Includes playing cards, indicia on the reels of a slot machine, video representations of playing cards and slot machine reel indicia on a lottery card, indicia on a face of a die, and indicia on pai gow tiles.

20

**game outcome**: A determination as to whether a player has won or lost a game; may also include a determination as to an amount of a payout and/or what is to be done with an initial bet.

25

**position**: A position of a reel may include either a position of a mechanical reel or an indicia displayed on a video screen and representative of a reel position.

**random outcome**: One or more game indicia produced by a random or pseudo-random process; in the game of blackjack "random outcome" refers only to a complete player's hand or a complete dealer's hand or an additionally drawn card.

30

**reel**: A reel of a slot machine may include either an actual mechanical reel or a field in a video display representative of a slot machine reel.

**slot machine:** May include a slot machine having mechanical reels controlled by a processing device, a video slot machine, a computer programmed to simulate a slot machine, and a web server that interacts with a client device to display a slot machine simulation on the client device.

5

**specific entry:** A score, or set of one or more game indicia, specified by a player to replace a random outcome.

FIG. 1 is a flow chart that provides an overview illustration of a method 100 provided in accordance with the present invention. According to a first step 102 in FIG. 1, a request is received from a player for a specific entry in a game of chance. The effect of the specific entry is to eliminate at least one random outcome and to limit, but not to exclude, the effect of chance on the outcome of the game. As one example of a specific entry that may be requested by a player, in the game of blackjack, according to an embodiment of the invention, the player is permitted to have a predetermined score, such as 18, instead of a player's hand.

At step 104 a random outcome is determined. In the blackjack example mentioned just above, the random outcome would be dealing and playing of the dealer's hand.

At step 106, the game outcome is determined. That is, it is determined whether the player has won or lost. In the blackjack example discussed above, the playing of the dealer's hand results in a score which is compared with the predetermined score requested by the player as a specific entry. If the score provided by the specific entry is higher than the score which results from the dealer's hand (random outcome) then the game rules prescribe that the player wins. However, if the score obtained from the dealer's hand is higher than the specific entry, then the dealer wins. In accordance with conventional practice in blackjack, a tie score results in a "push" or draw, in which the player's bet is returned to the player and the player does not win.

FIG. 2 is a schematic representation of a video game device 200 in which the present invention may be applied. The electronic components and other hardware which constitute the device 200 may be the same as for known video game devices, including those which are used for video poker or video blackjack, or devices which simulate a slot machine by

using a video display. The video game device 200 may include a processor 202 that controls operations of the video game device 200. The processor 202 is electrically connected to a clock 204, a Read Only Memory ("ROM") 206, a Random Access Memory ("RAM") 208, a display 210 and one or more input devices 212. These components are  
5 contained in a housing 214. It should be understood that the display 210 and input devices 212 are contained in the housing 214 in a manner such that the input devices are accessible to the player and the display device is visible to the player. The input devices 212 may take the form of push buttons. Alternatively, the input devices 212 and the display 210 may be combined in the form of a touch screen (not shown).

10 It was noted that the hardware making up the video game device 200 may be the same as the hardware used in known devices. Other hardware arrangements may also be used. The video game device provided in accordance with this embodiment of the invention may differ from prior art devices only in regard to a program stored in ROM 206 and/or RAM 208 and used to control the operation of the processor 202. Such program controls the  
15 video game device to carry out the process illustrated in FIG. 1 and/or similar processes, which will be described in additional detail below.

FIG. 3 illustrates in schematic terms a system 300 for playing games of chance over a network. The system 300 includes a gaming server 302, and a player terminal 304, in data communication with each other via the Internet 306.

20 The gaming server 302 may be implemented using any type of hardware now in use or later developed for performing web hosting applications. The player terminal 304 may be any client device now or hereafter used to communicate over a network with a computer host. In many cases the player terminal 304 may be embodied as a conventional personal computer. Many other possible embodiments of the player terminal 304 will be recognized  
25 by those of ordinary skill in the art. The Internet 306 shown in FIG. 3 is the well known network of computers which now virtually ubiquitously enables data communications all over the world. Other types of data networks may be used in place of the Internet 306.

Although only one player terminal 304 is shown in FIG. 3, it will be recognized that a large number of player terminals 304 may be connected to the gaming server 302 at  
30 different times and/or simultaneously.

FIG. 4 illustrates a process 400 that may be carried out in either video game device 200 (FIG. 2) or gaming system 300 (FIG. 3) or both. Process 400 is illustrated in more detail than the process 100 described in FIG. 1, and may accommodate a wide variety of player options in addition to those described in the blackjack example discussed in connection with FIG. 1.

According to a first step 402 in process 400, the video game device or gaming system, as the case may be, receives a player request for a specific entry. The specific entry may be, for example, a particular initial hand configuration of five cards for a game of draw poker.

Following step 402 is a step 404, at which the video game device or gaming system evaluates the requested specific entry and determines under what conditions the request is to be granted. (Although not indicated in the drawing, it is also contemplated to arrange the process 400 such that the player's request for a specific entry may be refused.) A decision block 406 follows step 404. At decision block 406 it is determined whether the specific entry requested by the player calls for an additional payment (e.g. a higher bet than a normal bet for the game). For example, in the blackjack example referred to above, the player may be permitted to request a score of 19 instead of his/her hand if the player makes a larger than normal bet of a predetermined amount. For this example, it may be assumed that a suitable rule or rules to enforce this requirement is stored in the video game device or gaming system.

If the rule indicates that an additional payment is required, then step 408 follows decision block 406. At step 408 it is determined, in accordance with the rule, what amount of payment is required. Then, at step 410, the required amount of payment is received from the player. This may be done by deducting the payment amount (e.g. enhanced bet) from a store of credits that the player has in the video game device or gaming system.

A decision block 412 follows step 410, or immediately follows decision block 406 if a negative determination is made at block 406. The purpose of decision block 412 is to determine whether the payout for winning the game is to be adjusted because of the player's requested specific entry. Again, this determination is preferably made based on a rule or rules stored in the video game device or in the gaming system. If it is determined at block 412 that the payout is to be adjusted, then the adjustment is made at step 414.

It will be appreciated that increasing the payment or bet without adjusting the payout and adjusting the payout without increasing the bet are essentially equivalent. A third equivalent would be to increase the bet while decreasing the payout. In any one of these cases, the change in the balance between bet and payout is made to offset any advantage that accrues to the player as a result of the specific entry requested by the player. As another alternative, the balance between bet and payout may remain unaltered but a specific entry may be granted to the player in consideration of the player making a sufficiently large bet on a particular game or play cycle.

It should be noted that specific entries requested by the player can be categorized at least in three ways, as those that benefit the player, as those that are substantially neutral, and as those that disadvantage the player. In some embodiments the proprietor of the game may increase the required bet and/or may reduce the payout whenever the player requests a specific entry that increases the advantage for the player. For the other two categories of specific entry, namely the substantially neutral or player-disadvantaging entries, the proprietor of the game may not either require an additional bet or may not reduce the payout.

As another alternative instead of or in addition to adjusting the bet or the payout, the odds for the remaining random outcome may be adjusted.

If the specific entry tends to provide an advantage to the player, the adjustment to the bet, to the payout, and/or to the remaining random outcome or outcomes may be arranged to (i) completely offset the advantage to the player, (ii) more than offset the advantage (i.e. increase the house advantage), or (iii) less than offset the player's advantage (i.e., allow the player to improve his/her position with the specific entry).

Step 416 follows step 414, or directly follows decision block 412 in the event that a negative determination is made at block 412. At step 416 the gaming system or video game device determines a random outcome. In the case of the blackjack example, the determination of the random outcome consists of dealing (or virtually dealing) the dealer's hand.

Following step 416 is step 418, at which the game outcome is determined. In the blackjack example, this is done by comparing the score for the dealer's hand with the specific score of 18 requested by the player.

Then, at step 420, the amount of payout, if any, is determined. Reverting again to the blackjack example, and assuming that the result of step 418 favors the player, and further assuming that there was no adjustment to the payout, step 420 would result in the player being paid an amount equal to his/her bet.

5 Although FIG. 4 shows decision block 412 and step 414 as preceding steps 416 and 418, it is also contemplated in other embodiments to modify process 400 such that block 412 and step 414 are performed after step 418 (i.e., after it is determined whether any payout is required). As will be understood from subsequent discussion, process 400 may also contain a determination as to whether the player is qualified to receive a specific entry. If  
10 the player satisfies certain qualification criteria, then any otherwise required adjustment in payout or enhanced bet may be waived. Alternatively, meeting qualification criteria may be a necessary condition for receiving a specific entry, with an adjustment to payout and/or enhanced bet also being required.

Up to this point the process 400 has primarily been explained in relation to  
15 embodiments in a video game device or in an Internet gaming system. It is, however, also contemplated to apply the process 400 in a face-to-face casino environment. In that regard, FIG. 5 is a plan-view illustration of an embodiment of a blackjack table that has been adapted for convenient playing of a modified blackjack game provided in accordance with the invention.

20 FIG. 5 shows a table surface 500 that has six places 502-1 through 502-5, each of the places 502 being for a respective player. Each place 502 includes a "bet" gaming chip placement area 504 and an exemplary "18" gaming chip placement area 506.

During play, the player places a chip or chips representing his/her bet in the bet area 504 if he/she wishes to play a conventional hand of blackjack. But if the player places  
25 his/her bet in the "18" area 506, then this signifies that the player is requesting a score of 18 to replace the player's hand that would otherwise be dealt in the conventional game of blackjack. The player may place a bet in each of the areas 504 and 506 to play a "free 18" hand and a conventional hand simultaneously.

According to another manner of implementing the invention at a face-to-face  
30 blackjack table, laminated plastic game pieces may be provided at the table to represent specific entries that the players may request. Once such game piece, representing a request



for a score of 18 to replace the player's hand, is indicated at 600 in FIG. 6. The game piece 600 includes a front surface 602 on which an indicia 604 is provided to indicate the specific score requested by the player. The game piece 600 also has a reverse face (not shown) which may set forth requirements for the specific entry represented on the front surface.

5 These requirements may include a required bet and/or a required modification of a payout for winning the game. Although only an "18" game piece is illustrated in the drawings, it is also contemplated to provide game pieces for other specific scores, such as 17, 19 or 20. It is contemplated that several game pieces representing various scores may be kept on hand at the blackjack table, awaiting requests from players. Other types of game pieces may be  
10 used in embodiments of the invention for other table games.

It is also contemplated to use an electronic device or display to indicate that the player has received an "18" or other specific entry.

It has been noted above that the present invention may be applied to blackjack by allowing a player to request a specific entry in place of the dealer's hand. This may also be  
15 done in the context of a physical casino blackjack table. The specific entry for the dealer's hand may be applicable only to the player who requests it, or may be applicable to all the players at the table. In the latter case, all of the players may be required to make a suitable payment in addition to their bets.

The present invention also contemplates modifying the game of blackjack by  
20 allowing the player to request a partial specific entry to replace a portion of the player's hand. For example, a player may be allowed to request a score of 11 to replace the initial two cards of the player's hand. The player would then be allowed to draw a card or cards to the 11 partial specific entry. This modification is different from the prior art practice of treating a coupon as a free ace, in that the presentation would support "doubling down." As  
25 is known to those who are skilled in the art, doubling down occurs when the player doubles his/her bet after seeing the dealer's up card. When the player doubles down, he/she agrees to ask for no more than one "hit" card. Also the present modification is different from the prior art "free ace" in that the partial score of 11 replaces two cards instead of one, so that the dealer's hand is dealt immediately after the player receives the partial score of 11. Also,  
30 the present modification would not allow for the player to receive a blackjack. It is contemplated that a suitable modification in the bet and/or the payout would be required for

the player to receive the partial score of 11 in accordance with this variation of blackjack provided in accordance with an aspect of the invention.

It is also contemplated to apply the present invention to video poker games. As is known, video poker can be played on a dedicated video game device or via a gaming system implemented through the Internet.

FIG. 7 represents a video display screen provided in accordance with an aspect of the invention to allow the player to request specific entries as an alternative to a conventional randomly dealt starting hand for a draw poker game. In the display screen of FIG. 7, a “normal deal” button 700 is provided to allow the player to select a conventional draw video poker game. As is well known, in the conventional draw video poker game, five cards are initially randomly dealt. The player is then permitted to discard any or all of the initial hand configuration in order to receive a “draw” of replacement cards for the discarded cards. The resulting final hand is then compared with a payout table to determine whether the player has won, and if so how much the payout is. In one example, a payout table may return a payout, at increasing odds, for hands having the following ranks: pair of jacks or better, two pair, three of a kind, straight, flush, full house, four of a kind, straight flush and royal flush.

Additional buttons 702, 704 and 706 are provided in the display of FIG. 7 to permit the user to replace the normal deal with a specific entry initial hand configuration corresponding to the respective button selected by the player. (It will be understood that the buttons may be selected via a mouse or other pointing device of a player terminal 304 (FIG. 3) if the invention is implemented via an Internet gaming system, or by a suitable input device such as a touch screen, if the invention is implemented in a video game device.)

If one of the buttons 702-706 is actuated, then an initial, non-random hand is dealt to allow the player to draw for a particular target hand indicated on the button. For instance, in the case of button 702, “Draw to Royal Flush”, ace, king, queen and jack of a single suit, plus another card of a different suit may be dealt automatically in response to actuation of the button 702. This initial hand configuration constitutes a specific entry replacing the random outcome of the normal deal provided in the conventional draw poker game. Then the fifth card is automatically discarded and another card is randomly drawn to determine whether a royal flush is achieved. If so, a payout at suitable odds is provided. Otherwise, the player loses his bet, but is free to play the same game again or to select another one of

the buttons 700, 704, 706. It is believed that many players may find it preferable to play repeatedly a "Draw to Royal Flush" game, having a relatively high payout, instead of the conventional video draw poker game with its more frequent but usually lower payouts.

Similarly, if button 704 ("Draw to Straight Flush") is actuated, four cards in  
5 sequence in a single suit (but not ace, king, queen, jack) are dealt, plus a fifth card, to provide the specific entry. Then, as before, the fifth card is discarded and another card is randomly drawn to determine whether the straight flush is completed. A lower payout might be provided in this case.

As to the "Draw to Flush" button 706, those of ordinary skill will now recognize the  
10 nature of an appropriate specific initial configuration of a hand to be dealt in response to actuation of button 706.

Of course, some of the specific entry options of the embodiment of FIG. 7 may be omitted, and/or replaced or supplemented by other options, such as "Draw to Full House".

In the draw poker example described above it is contemplated that, at least in a video  
15 game or gaming system embodiment, the player may be permitted to specify any starting hand. To facilitate such an embodiment of the invention, it is contemplated to calculate in advance a suitable payout table and/or a suitable bet for every possible hand, and to store the resulting data in a lookup table to be accessed upon the player's requesting a particular hand. Alternatively, a suitable payout table and/or a suitable bet may be calculated in real  
20 time in response to the player's request for a particular hand. An appropriate user interface may be provided including five fields in which a card is to be dealt or drawn (in accordance with conventional practice), but with the addition of pull-down menus at each field for specifying the rank and suit of the card requested for the respective field. In addition, the payment and/or payout may be calculated to allow the player-specified specific entry  
25 starting hand.

There has been described above an example of requesting a specific entry in place of the initial hand in draw poker. It is further contemplated that specific entries could be requested for other varieties of poker. For example, in "Texas hold 'em" poker, the player could be permitted to request a specific entry in place of the two card hand normally dealt to  
30 the player. The specific entry would take the form of two particular cards requested by the

player. The bet required and/or the payout could be adjusted as appropriate based on the particular card combination requested.

Furthermore, it is contemplated to allow requests for specific entries in face-to-face poker games, as well as in video poker. In the face-to-face situation, house rules may be formulated that allow for specific entries to be granted on a player's request upon suitable conditions such as additional antes, and/or adjustments of a pot or payout among the players. The granting of a request for a specific entry in this example may be automatic upon the player agreeing to the required conditions, or may be subject to approval by the other players at the table.

In blackjack it is contemplated to permit a specific entry to be substituted for a "hit" card, and in draw poker it is contemplated to permit a specific entry to be substituted for one or more draw cards.

According to another embodiment of the invention, a player is permitted to request a specific entry in a slot machine, or in a virtual representation of a slot machine provided by a video game device or a gaming system. The specific entry that may be requested corresponds to a particular final reel position for each of one or two reels of a slot machine that has three reels. Thus, assuming the highest payout is for three sevens, the player is permitted to specify that two of the reels are positioned at seven and only the third reel is spun. A suitable modification to the payout and/or the bet may be required. Alternatively, the probability for the third reel providing a seven may be adjusted to be commensurate with the payout.

It is also contemplated that the present invention may be applied to the game of craps. For example, a player's initial throw of the dice may be replaced by a specific entry, or only one die out of the two may be replaced by a specific entry.

It has been indicated above that the granting of a specific entry may be dependent on adjusting the required bet and/or adjusting the payout for winning and/or changing the probabilities which govern the remaining random outcome. However, it is contemplated that a player may be granted a request for a specific entry for other reasons. For example, a casino may wish to encourage continued play by granting certain preferred players one or more specific entries based on the player's history of play or current rate of play or time period of play. As an example, a player who plays continuously for an hour at a blackjack

table may be allowed two specific entries per hour consisting of a score for the player's hand of 19. Specific entries may also be awarded after the player has lost a certain amount of money within a given period of time, or has lost a number of hands in a row, or if the player has been exceptionally unlucky in a previous hand.

5           An event that qualifies a player for a specific entry may be noted by a human dealer, or may be automatically detected by a device such as a video game device or a gaming server. The device may then automatically provide to the player the option of requesting the specific entry.

10           A specific entry may also be granted to a player on the basis of other activities of the player, such as purchasing services or goods from the proprietor of the game or from an affiliate of the proprietor, or because the player is a newcomer to the game. It is also contemplated that specific entries may be permitted at times when relatively few players are playing a game, in order to draw new players into the game and increase traffic. Also, a specific entry may be granted in a situation where the player receiving the specific entry is  
15           faring much worse than other players at the gaming table.

          With the modified games of chance provided in accordance with the invention, the player is provided with additional options to specify starting conditions of the game, thereby increasing the attractiveness of the game for the player. The options provided to the player in accordance with the invention may allow the player to overcome a perceived run of bad  
20           luck, and thus encourage the player to continue playing, to the advantage of the proprietor of the game. For example, a player who has been busting frequently in blackjack may be inclined to continue playing when he/she is allowed to request a specific entry in place of the player's hand, thereby completely eliminating any chance of going bust.

25           Moreover, because of player preferences and for psychological reasons players may be attracted to the opportunity to pursue certain outcomes (e.g. straights or flushes in poker) even though there is no statistical advantage in pursuing such outcomes. The present invention, by permitting requests for specific entries, allows casinos to cater to such player preferences.

30           Players may also find it preferable to patronize casinos that provide the option of specific entries even when the players do not avail themselves of the option. Simply having the option may favorably dispose the players to the casino.

Although the present invention has been described with respect to preferred embodiments thereof, those skilled in the art will note that various substitutions, modifications and variations may be made with respect to the embodiments described herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

99-081 AP2 Free 18 in Blackjack

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of administering a game, wherein the game involves at least a first random  
2 outcome and a second random outcome combined according to game rules to produce a  
3 game outcome, the method comprising:

4 receiving a player request for a specific entry instead of one of the random  
5 outcomes, the specific entry affecting a likelihood of a game outcome and being  
6 selected from a finite set of possibilities not determined by chance; and

7 combining the specific entry and the remaining at least one of the random  
8 outcomes according to the game rules to determine the game outcome.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the game is blackjack and the specific entry is a  
2 specific score that replaces one of a player's hand and a dealer's hand.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the specific score replaces the player's hand.

1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the specific score is one of 17, 18, 19 and 20.

1 5. The method of claim 2, wherein the specific score replaces the dealer's hand.

1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the specific score is one of 17, 18, 19 and 20.

1 7. The method of claim 2, wherein the specific entry is requested by placing a betting  
2 chip in a betting chip placement area.

1 8. The method of claim 2, wherein the specific entry is represented by a game piece.

1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the game is played on a video game device.

1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the game is played via the Internet.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the game is poker and the specific entry specifies an  
2 initial configuration of a player's hand.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the specific entry is granted only upon consent of  
2 at least one other player or upon consent of a proprietor of the game.

1 13. The method of claim 1, wherein the specific entry specifies a final position of at least  
2 one reel of a slot machine and the remaining one of the random outcomes is a randomly  
3 determined final position of at least one other reel of the slot machine.

1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein:

2 the slot machine has three reels;

3 the specific entry specifies respective final positions of two of the three  
4 reels; and

5 the remaining one of the random outcomes is a randomly determined final  
6 position of a third one of the reels.

1 15. The method of claim 1, further comprising adjusting a bet for the game in connection  
2 with the player request for a specific entry.

1 16. The method of claim 15, further comprising notifying the player of the adjustment of  
2 the bet.

1 17. The method of claim 15, further comprising adjusting a payout for the game in  
2 connection with the player request for a specific entry.

1 18. The method of claim 1, further comprising adjusting a payout for the game in  
2 connection with the player request for a specific entry.

1 19. The method of claim 18, further comprising notifying the player of the adjustment of  
2 the payout.

1 20. The method of claim 1, further comprising changing a probability for the remaining  
2 one of the random outcomes in connection with the player request for a specific entry.

1 21. The method of claim 20, further comprising the step of notifying the player of the  
2 change in probability for the remaining one of the random outcomes.



1 22. Apparatus for administering a game, wherein the game involves a first random  
2 outcome and a second random outcome combined according to game rules to produce a  
3 game outcome, the apparatus comprising:

4 a processor;

5 an input device connected to the processor;

6 a display connected to the processor;

7 a memory connected to the processor and storing a program,

8 the processor operative with the program to:

9 receive a player request for a specific entry instead of one of the random  
10 outcomes, the specific entry being selected from a finite set of possibilities not  
11 determined by chance and the specific entry affecting a likelihood of a game  
12 outcome; and

13 combine the specific entry and a remaining one of the random outcomes  
14 according to the game rules to produce the game outcome.

1 23. Apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the input device and the display are  
2 connected to the processor via the Internet.

1 24. Apparatus according to claim 22, further comprising a housing within which the  
2 processor, the input device, the display and the memory are contained.

1 25. An article of manufacture comprising:

2 a computer readable medium having computer readable program code  
3 means embodied therein for administering a game, the game involving a first  
4 random outcome and a second random outcome combined according to game rules  
5 to produce a game outcome, the computer readable program code means in said  
6 article of merchandise comprising:

7 computer readable program code means for receiving a player request for a  
8 specific entry, wherein the specific entry replaces one of the random outcomes, the  
9 specific entry being selected from a finite set of possibilities not determined by  
10 chance and the specific entry affecting a likelihood of a game outcome; and

11 computer readable program code means for combining the specific entry  
12 and a remaining one of the random outcomes according to the game rules to  
13 determine the game outcome.

1 26. A method of playing a game of twenty-one, comprising:

2 allowing a player to select a specific score instead of a player's hand;  
3 dealing and playing a dealer's hand; and  
4 comparing the specific score to the dealer's hand to determine a winner of  
5 the game.

1 27. A method of playing a game of twenty-one, comprising:

2 allowing a player to select a specific score instead of a dealer's hand;  
3 dealing and playing a player's hand; and  
4 comparing the player's hand to the specific score to determine a winner of  
5 the game.

1 28. A method of playing a poker game, comprising:

2 allowing a player to select an initial hand that has not been determined by  
3 chance;  
4 allowing the player to draw at least one additional card to complete the  
5 hand; and  
6 determining a game outcome based on the completed hand.

1 29. The method of claim 28, wherein the determining step includes determining whether  
2 the completed hand matches a target hand.

1 30. The method of claim 29, wherein the poker game is played by using a video game  
2 device.

1 31. The method of claim 28, wherein the poker game is played by using an Internet  
2 gaming system.

1 32. A method of operating a slot machine, comprising:

2 allowing a player to specify a position of a reel, the position not being  
3 predetermined by chance; and  
4 spinning at least one other reel of the slot machine to determine an  
5 outcome of a play cycle.

1 33. The method of claim 32, wherein the slot machine has only three reels, the player is  
2 allowed to specify respective final positions of two of the reels, and only a third one of  
3 the reels is spun.

1 34. The method of claim 32, played by using a video game device.

1 35. The method of claim 32, played by using an Internet gaming system.

1 36. A method of playing a game of twenty-one, comprising:

2 allowing a player to select a score of eleven in place of an initial two-card  
3 hand;  
4 dealing a dealer's hand;  
5 after the dealing step, allowing the player to request at least one additional  
6 card to complete the player's hand;  
7 playing the dealer's hand; and  
8 comparing a score for the player's hand with a score for the dealer's hand  
9 to determine an outcome of the game.

1 37. The method of claim 36, further comprising, after the dealing step, allowing the  
2 player to double a bet in return for the player agreeing to request only one card to  
3 complete the player's hand.

### ABSTRACT

A game to be modified in accordance with the invention involves a first random outcome and a second random outcome that are combined according to game rules to produce a game outcome. The game is administered by receiving a player request for a specific entry, the specific entry replacing one of the random outcomes and being selected from a finite set of possibilities not determined by chance. The requested specific entry affects the probable outcome of the game. The specific entry is combined with the remaining one of the random outcomes according to the game rules to determine the game outcome. According to one embodiment, the specific entry may be a score such as 18 which replaces the player's hand in the game of blackjack.

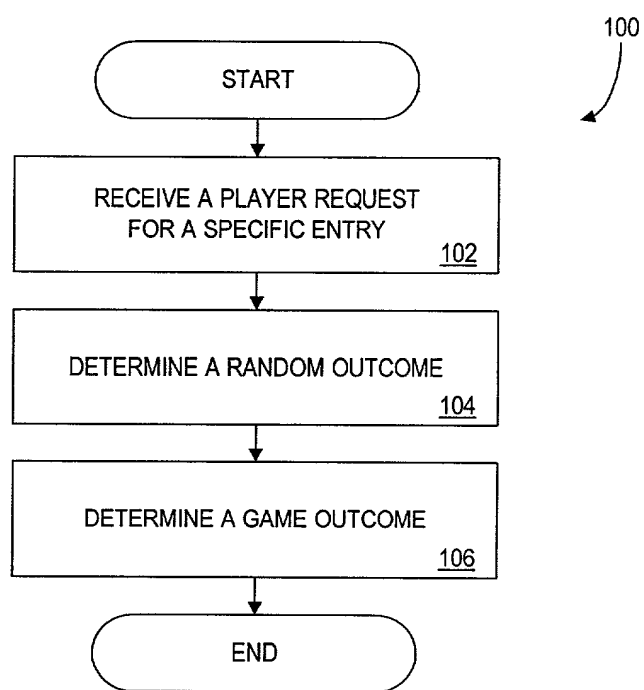


FIG. 1

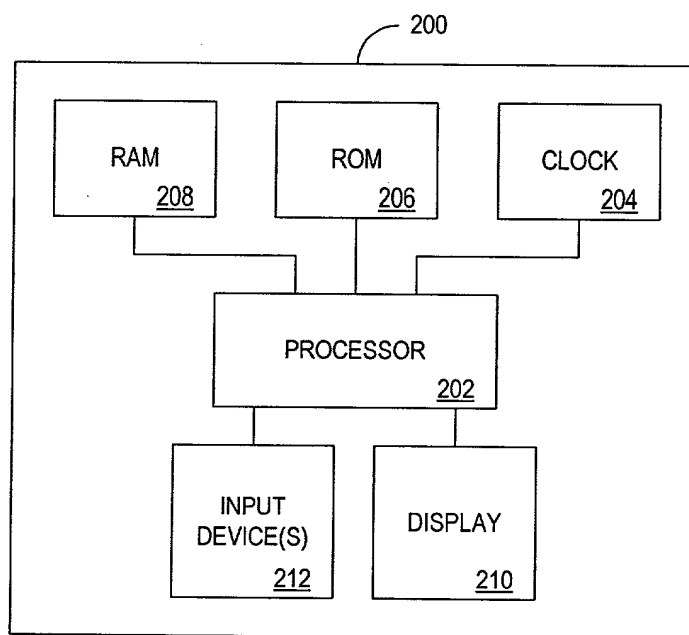


FIG. 2

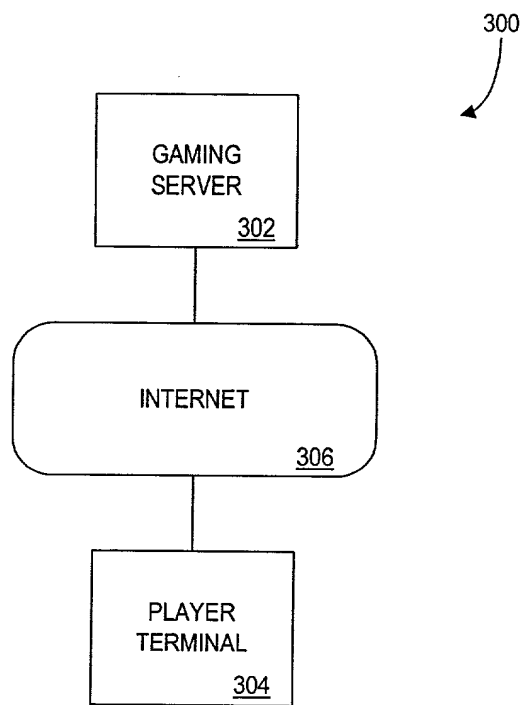


FIG. 3

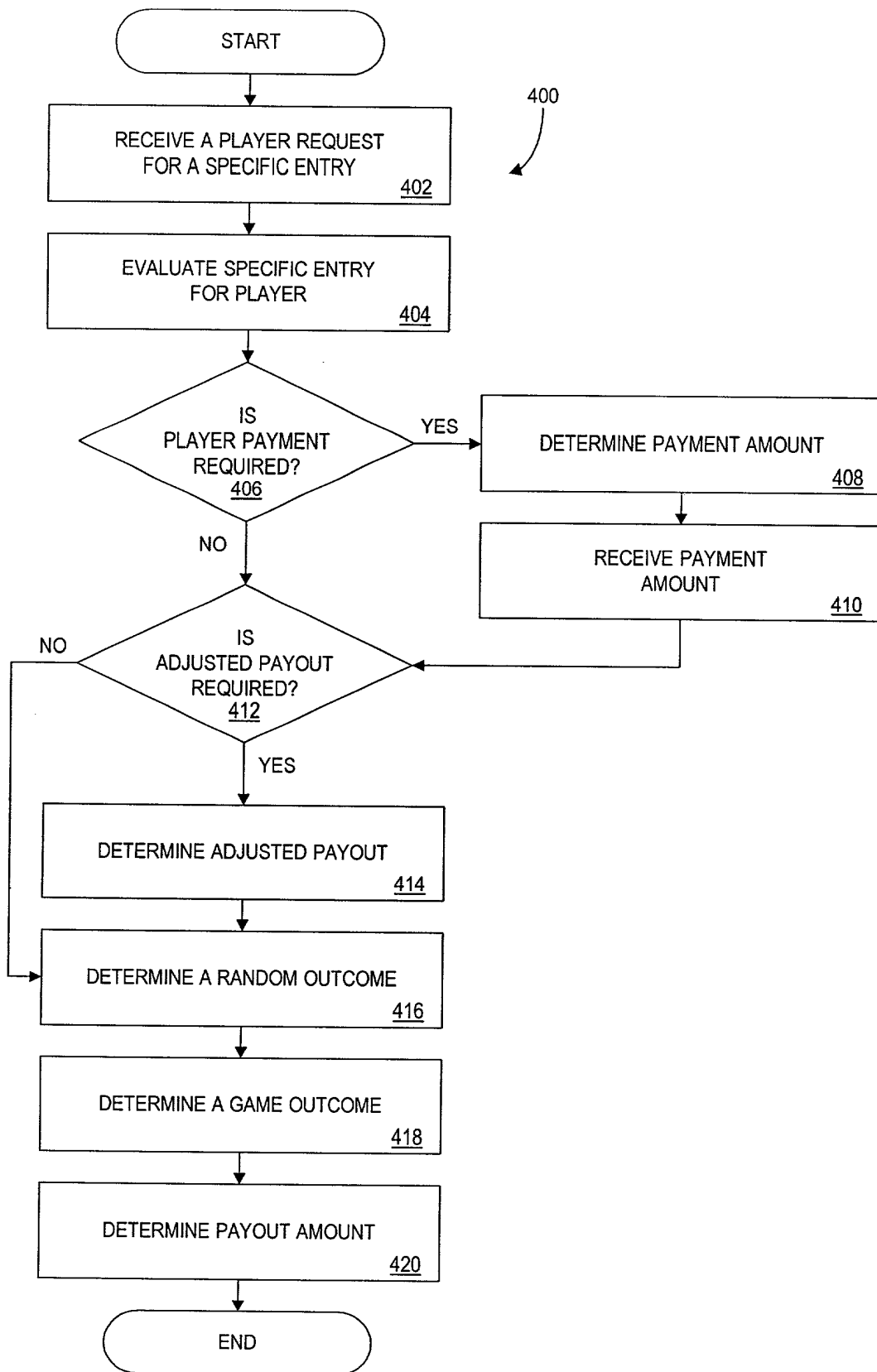


FIG. 4



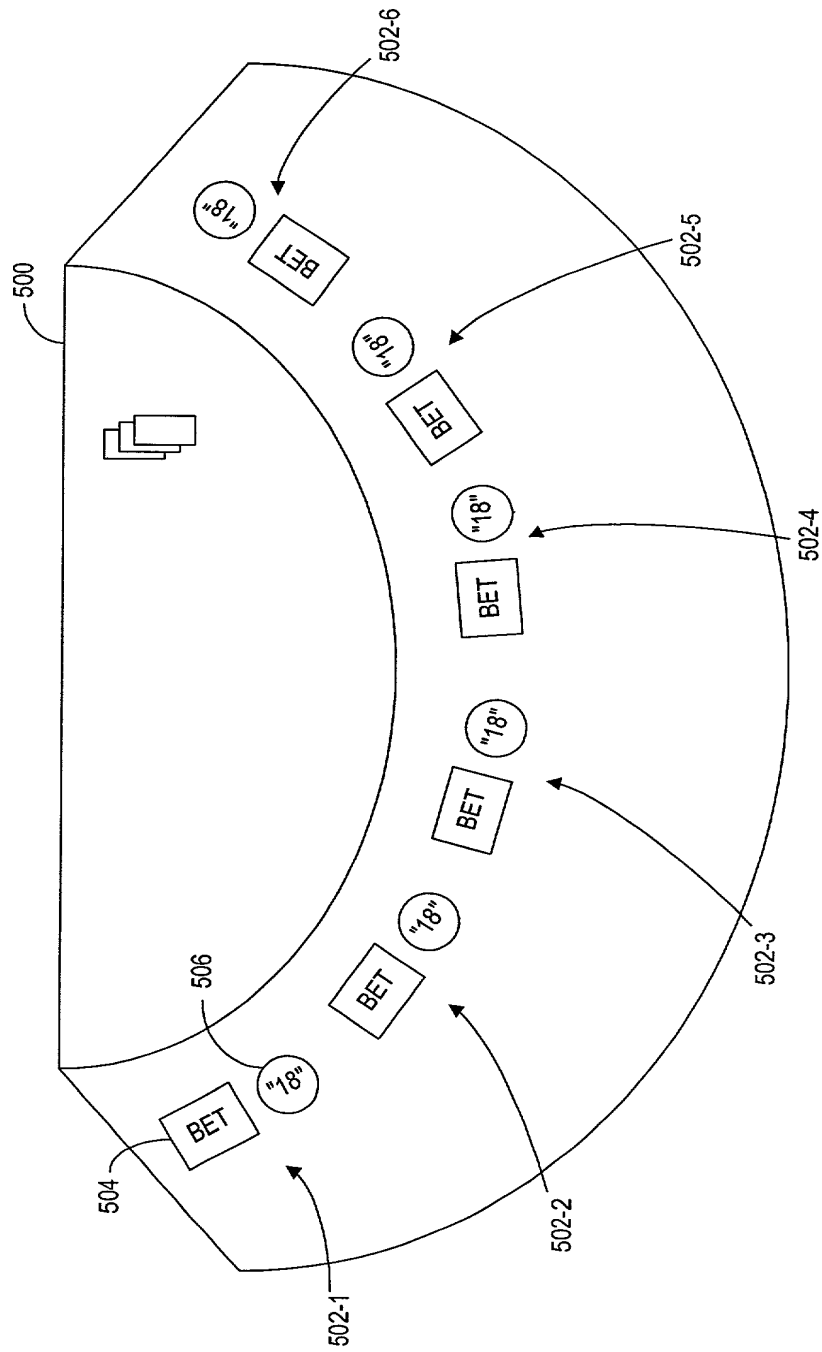


FIG. 5

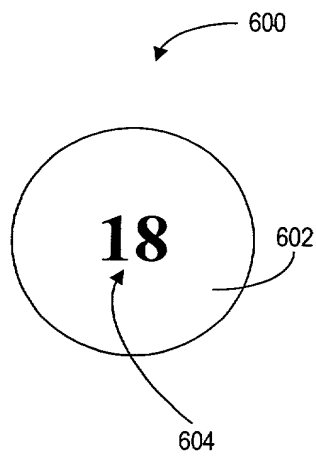


FIG. 6

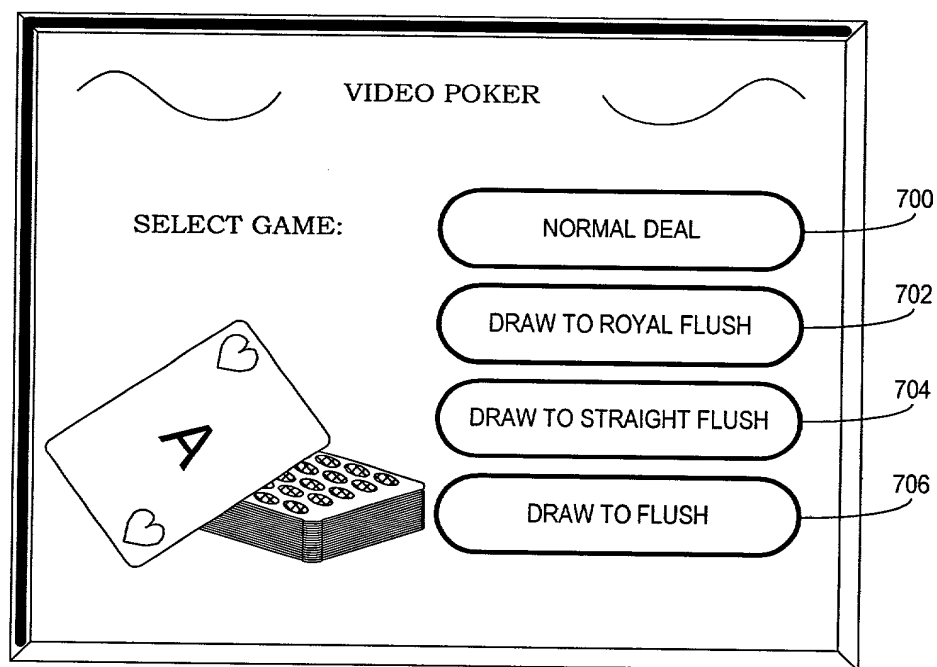


FIG. 7

Docket No.

99-081

# Declaration and Power of Attorney For Patent Application

## English Language Declaration

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

### GAMES OF CHANCE WITH PLAYER - SPECIFIED ELEMENTS

the specification of which

(check one)

☒ is attached hereto.

☐ was filed on \_\_\_\_\_ as United States Application No. or PCT International Application Number \_\_\_\_\_ and was amended on \_\_\_\_\_ (if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) or Section 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or Section 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application(s)			Priority Not Claimed
_____ (Number)	_____ (Country)	_____ (Day/Month/Year Filed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ (Number)	_____ (Country)	_____ (Day/Month/Year Filed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ (Number)	_____ (Country)	_____ (Day/Month/Year Filed)	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>60/189,218</b>	<b>March 14, 2000</b>
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)
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(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)

(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status) (patented, pending, abandoned)
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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. *(list name and registration number)*

**22927**

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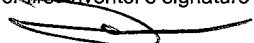
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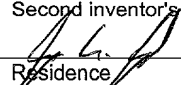
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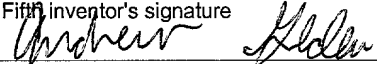
Nathaniel Levin (203) 461-7114

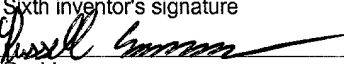
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Seventh inventor's signature

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Date

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Post Office Address

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Full name of eighth inventor, if

Eighth inventor's signature

Date

Residence

Citizenship

Post Office Address

Full name of ninth inventor, if any

Ninth inventor's signature

Date

Residence

Citizenship

Post Office Address

Full name of tenth inventor, if any

Tenth inventor's signature

Date

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Citizenship

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